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Seventy Matters Related to Fasting

مجموعة من رسائل فضيلة الشيخ محمد بن صالح المنجد

Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid

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البريد الإلكتروني: en@islamhouse.com

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Introduction

Praise be to Allaah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own selves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allaah guides cannot be misled, and whomsoever He leaves astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allaah has blessed His slaves by assigning for them certain seasons of goodness in which hasanaat (rewards for good deeds) are multiplied, sayyi`aat (bad deeds) are forgiven, people's statuses are raised and the hearts of believers turn to their Master. Those who purify themselves attain success and those who corrupt themselves fail. Allaah has created His slaves to worship Him, as He says:

> **"And I (Allaah) created not the jinns and humans except that they should worship Me (Alone)."** [Surah adh-Dhaariyaat 51:56]

One of the greatest acts of worship is fasting, which Allaah has made obligatory on His slaves. He (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

> **"Observing al-siyaam (the fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)."** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

Allaah encourages His slaves to fast:

> **"… And that you fast, is better for you, if only you know."** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

He guides them to give thanks to Him for having made fasting obligatory on them:

"… that you should magnify Allaah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

He has made fasting dear to people and has made it easy for them so that they do not find it too difficult to give up their habits and what they are accustomed to. Allaah says:

"…for a fixed number of days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

He has mercy on them and keeps them away from difficulties and harm, as He says:

"… but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

It is no wonder then that in this month, the hearts of the believers turn to their Most Merciful Lord, fearing Him above them, and hope to attain His reward and the great victory [of Paradise].

As the status of this act of worship is so high, it is essential to learn the ahkaam (rulings) pertaining to this month of fasting so that Muslims will know what is obligatory in order to do it, what is haraam (forbidden) in order to avoid it, and what is permissible so that they do not unnecessarily subject themselves to any hardship by depriving themselves from it.

This book is a summary of the rulings, etiquette and Sunnah of fasting. May Allaah make it of benefit to me and my Muslim brothers. Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds.

The Definition of Siyaam (Fasting)

(1) Linguistically, siyaam in Arabic means abstinence. In Islamic terminology, it means abstaining from things that break the fast, from dawn until sunset, having first made the intention (niyyah) to do so.

The Ruling concerning Fasting

(2) The Ummah (Islamic nation) is in agreement to the fact that fasting the month of Ramadan is obligatory, the evidence for which is in the Qur`aan and Sunnah. Allaah (ﷻ) says:

> **"O you who believe! Observing al-sawn (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)."** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Islam is built on five [pillars]…"[1]

…among which he mentioned fasting in Ramadan.[2]

Whoever breaks the fast during Ramadan without a legitimate excuse has committed a serious major sin, The Prophet (ﷺ) said when describing a dream that he had seen:

> **"…until I was at a mountain where I heard loud voices. I asked, 'What are these voices?' They said, 'This is the howling of the people of Hellfire.' Then I was taken [to another place], and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings with the corners of their mouths torn and dripping with blood. I said, 'Who are these?' They**

[1] Al-Bukhaari.

[2] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, 1/49.

said, 'The people who broke their fast before it was the proper time to do so (i.e., before the time of breaking fast).' "[3]

Al-Haafidh al-Dhahabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said,

"Among the believers it is well-established that whoever does not fast in Ramadan without a valid excuse is worse than an adulterer or drunkard; they doubt whether he is even a Muslim at all, and they regard him as a heretic and profligate."

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"If a person does not fast in Ramadan knowing that it is haraam but making it halaal (permissible) for himself to do so, he must be executed; and if he does it because he is immoral [but believes it is haraam (impermissible)], then he must be punished for not fasting."[4]

The Virtues of Fasting

(3) The virtues of fasting are great indeed, and one of the things reported in authentic (saheeh) ahaadeeth is that Allaah has chosen fasting for Himself, and He will reward it and multiply the reward without measure, as He says [in a Hadeeth Qudsi[5]]:

"Except for fasting which is only for My sake, and I will reward him for it."[6]

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[3] Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/420.

[4] Majmoo' al-Fataawaaa, 25/265.

[5] **Hadeeth Qudsi:** a hadeeth which the Prophet (ﷺ) narrates from Allah exactly what He said. It differs from the Qur`an in that it is not recited, and it differs from a regular hadeeth in that the words themselves are revealed and not just the meanings.

[6] Al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1904; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/407.

- Fasting has no equal[7], and the du'aa (supplication) of the fasting person will not be refused.[8]

- The fasting person has two moments of joy: one when he breaks his fast, and one when he meets his Lord and rejoices over his fasting[9].

- Fasting will intercede for a person on the Day of Judgment and will say,

> **"O Lord, I prevented him from his food and physical desires during the day, so let me intercede for him."**[10]

- The smell that comes from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved to Allaah than the scent of musk.[11]

- Fasting is a protection and a strong fortress that keeps a person safe from the Fire.[12]

- Whoever fasts one day for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will distance him from the Fire a distance of seventy years from the Fire.[13]

- Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allaah, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise.[14]

- **"In Paradise there is a gate called al-Rayyaan through which those who fast will enter, and no one will enter through it except them; when they have entered it will be locked, and no-one else will enter through it."**[15]

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[7] Al-Nasaa`i, 4/165; Saheeh at-Targheeb, 1/413.

[8] Reported by al-Bayhaqi, 3/345; al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, 1797.

[9] Reported by Muslim, 2/807.

[10] Reported by Ahmad, 2/174. Al-Haythami classed its isnaad as hasan in al-Majma', 3/181. See also Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/411.

[11] Muslim, 2/807.

[12] Reported by Ahmad, 2/402; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/411; Saheeh al-Jaami', 3880.

[13] Reported by Muslim, 2/808.

[14] Reported by Ahmad, 5/391; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/412.

[15] Al-Bukhaari, Fath, no. 1797.

- Ramadan is a pillar of Islam, the Qur`aan was revealed in this month, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months.

- "When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains."[16]

- Fasting Ramadan is equivalent to fasting ten months.[17]

- "Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and with the hope of (Allah's) reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." [18]

- With the breaking of every fast, Allaah will choose people to free from Hellfire.[19]

The Benefits of Fasting

(4) There is much wisdom and numerous benefits in fasting which relate to the taqwaa Allah mentioned in the aayah (verse):

> **"…that you may become al-muttaqoon (the pious)."** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:183]

The interpretation of this aayah is that if a person refrains from halaal things hoping to gain the pleasure of Allaah and out of fear of His punishment, it will be easier for him to refrain from doing haraam things.

When a person's stomach is empty and he is hungry, many of his other faculties are kept from feeling hunger or desires; but when his stomach is satisfied, his tongue, eyes, hands and private parts start to feel hunger.

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[16] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 3277.

[17] See Musnad Ahmad, 5/280; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/421.

[18] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fath, no. 37.

[19] Reported by Ahmad, 5/256; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/419.

Fasting leads to the defeat of Shaytaan; it controls desires and protects one's faculties.

When the fasting person feels the pangs of hunger, he experiences how the poor feel, thus he feels compassion towards them and gives them something to ward off their hunger. Hearing about them is not the same as sharing their suffering, just as a rider does not understand the hardship of walking until he gets down and walks.

Fasting trains the person to avoid desires and to keep away from sin; it helps a person to overcome his own nature and to wean himself away from bad habits. It also trains a person to get used to being organized and punctual, which will solve the problem that many people have of being disorganized, if only they realized.

Fasting is also a demonstration of the unity of the Muslims, as the Ummah (Islamic nation) fasts and breaks its fast all at the same time.

Fasting also provides a great opportunity for those who are calling others to Allaah. In this month many people come to the mosque for the first time, and also those who have not been to the mosque for a long time, and their hearts are open, so we must make the most of this opportunity by preaching in a gentle manner, teaching appropriate lessons and speaking beneficial words, whilst also cooperating in righteousness and good deeds. The teacher should not be so preoccupied with others though that he forgets his own soul and becomes like a candle that lights the way for others while it is itself consumed.

The Etiquettes and Sunan of Fasting

Some aspects of fasting are obligatory (fard) and others are recommended (mustahab).

We should make sure that we eat and drink something at suhoor (the time before dawn), and that we delay it until just before the adhaan of Fajr. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Have suhoor, for in suhoor there is blessing (barakah)."**[20]

> **"Suhoor is blessed food, and it involves being different from the people of the Book. What a good suhoor for the believer is dates."**[21]

One should not delay iftaar (breakfast after dusk), because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"The people remain upon goodness so long as they do not delay iftaar."** [22]

A person should break his fast in the manner described in the hadeeth narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه):

> **"The Prophet (ﷺ) used to break his fast with fresh dates before praying; if fresh dates were not available, he would eat (dried) dates; if dried dates were not available, he would have a few sips of water."**[23]

After iftaar, it is Sunnah to recite the words reported in the hadeeth narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both), according to which the Prophet (ﷺ), when he broke his fast, would say:

> **"Dhahaba adh-dhama´, wabtallat il-'urooq, wa thabat al-ajru in shaa Allaah (The thirst has gone, the veins are flowing again, and the reward is confirmed, in shaa Allaah)."**[24]

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[20] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, 4/139.

[21] Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2345; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/448.

[22] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, 4/198.

[23] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/79 and others. He said it is a ghareeb hasan hadeeth. Classed as saheeh in al-Irwaa´, no. 922.

[24] Reported by Abu Dawood, 2/765; its isnaad was classed as hasan by al-Daaraqutni, 2/185.

Keeping away from sin, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"When any of you is fasting, let him not commit any sin…" [25]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever does not stop speaking falsehood and acting in accordance with it, Allaah has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1903)

The fasting person should avoid all kinds of haraam actions, such as backbiting, obscenity and lying, otherwise his reward may all be lost. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"It may be that a fasting person gets nothing from his fast except hunger."[26]

Among the things that can destroy one's hasanaat (good deeds) and cause sayi`aat (bad deeds) to be recorded is allowing oneself to be distracted by quiz-shows, soap operas, movies and sports matches, idle gatherings, hanging about in the streets with evil people and time-wasters, driving around for no purpose, and crowding the streets and sidewalks. The month of tahajjud, dhikr and worship for many people becomes a month in which they sleep during the day – so as to avoid feeling hunger – and spend their nights in entertainment and indulging in their desires. This further causes them to miss their prayers and the opportunity to pray them in congregation. Some people even greet this month with feelings of annoyance, thinking only of the pleasures they will miss out on. In Ramadan, some people even travel to the lands of the disbelievers to enjoy a holiday! Even the mosques are not free from such evils, as women also attend wearing makeup and perfume. Even the Sacred House of Allaah (Ka'bah) is not free of these ills. Some people make this month a season for begging, even though they are not in need. Some entertain themselves with dangerous fireworks and the like, and some of them

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[25] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1904.

[26] Reported by Ibn Maajah, 1/539; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/453.

waste their time in the markets, wandering around the shops, or having new clothes stitched and following fashions. Some shop owners introduce new products and new styles in their stores during the last ten days of the month, thus keeping people away from earning rewards and hasanaat.

A person should not allow himself to be provoked, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"If someone fights him or insults him, he should say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting.' "**[27]

One reason for this is to remind himself, and the other reason is to remind the one who is provoking him. But anyone who looks at the conduct of many of those who fast will see something quite different. It is essential to exercise self-control and be calm, but we see the opposite among the crazy drivers who speed up when they hear the adhaan for Maghrib.

A person should not overeat, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"The son of Adam fills no vessel worse than his stomach."**[28]

The wise person lives not to eat, but rather, eats to live. The best type of food is that which is there to be used, not that which is there to be served. People indulge in making all kinds of food (during Ramadan) and treating food preparation as a virtual art form, and thus housewives and servants spend all their time on making food. This keeps them away from worship, and people spend far more on food during Ramadan than they ordinarily do. Thus the month becomes the month of indigestion, obesity and gastric illness in which people eat like gluttons and drink like thirsty camels. When they stand to pray Taraaweeh (the night prayer in Ramadan) they do so reluctantly, and some of them leave after the first two rak'ahs.

[27] Reported by al-Bukhaari and others. Al-Fat'h, no. 1894.

[28] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2380; he said, this is a hasan saheeh hadeeth.

A person should increase in his generosity by sharing knowledge, giving charity, using one's position of authority or physical strength to help others, and having a good attitude. Al-Bukhaari and Muslim reported that Ibn 'Abbaas (ﷺ) said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was the most generous of people [in doing good], and he was most generous of all in Ramadan when Jibreel met with him; he used to meet him every night in Ramadan and teach him the Qur`aan. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was more generous in doing good than a blowing wind."**[29]

How can people prefer stinginess to generosity and laziness to action to the extent that they do not do their work nor treat one another properly, and they use fasting as an excuse for all this?!

Combining fasting with feeding the poor is one of the means of attaining Paradise, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"In Paradise there are rooms whose outside can be seen from the inside and the inside can be seen from the outside. Allaah has prepared them for those who feed the poor, those who are gentle in speech, those who fast regularly, and those who pray at night when people are asleep."**[30]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever gives food to a fasting person with which to break his fast, he will have the reward equal to his (the fasting person), without it detracting in the slightest from the reward of the fasting person."**[31]

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[29] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 6.

[30] Reported by Ahmad 5/343; Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 2137. Al-Albaani said in his footnote, its isnaad is hasan because of other corroborating reports.

[31] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/171; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/451.

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, “What is meant is that he should feed him until he is satisfied.” [32]

A number of the Salaf[33] (may Allaah have mercy on them) preferred the poor over themselves when breaking their fast at the time of iftaar. Among these were ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar, Maalik ibn Deenaar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others. ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar would not break his fast unless there were orphans and poor people with him.

What should be done in this Great Month

Prepare yourselves and your environment for worship [by doing the following]:

- Hasten to repent and turn back to Allaah.

- Rejoice at the onset of this month.

- Fast properly.

- Have the correct frame of mind and fear Allaah when praying Taraaweeh.

- Do not become tired during the middle[34] ten days of the month.

- Seek Laylat al-Qadr.

- Read the entire Qur`aan repetitively, try to weep, and try to understand what you are reading.

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[32] Al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah, p. 109.

[33] **Salaf:** Our pious predecessors, particularly those of the first three generations. (Editor)

[34] Usually people start off the month with great enthusiasm, and also spend the last ten days in worship due to its great merits. As a result, people may feel apathetic during the middle of the month. (Editor)

- ‘Umrah during Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj [performed with the Prophet (ﷺ)].

- Charity given during this virtuous time is multiplied.

- I’tikaaf (retreat in the mosque for worship) is a confirmed Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

- There is nothing wrong with congratulating one another at the beginning of the month. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to tell his Companions the good news of the onset of Ramadan and urge them to make the most of it. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

> **“The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said, ‘There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month. Allaah has made it obligatory on you to fast (this month). During it, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are chained up. In it there is a night that is better than a thousand months, and whoever is deprived of its goodness has indeed been deprived.’ ”**[35]

Some Rulings concerning Fasting

(6) One kind of fasting is that which must be done on consecutive days, such as the fast of Ramadan, fasting in expiation for killing someone by mistake, divorcing one’s wife by dhihaar[36], or having intercourse during the day in Ramadan. Also, one who makes a vow to fast consecutive days must fulfill it.

Another kind of fasting is that which does not have to be done on consecutive days, such as making up days missed in Ramadan, fasting ten

[35] Reported by al-Nasaa`i, 4/129; Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/490.

[36] A jaahili form of divorce in which a man says to his wife, “You are to me as the back of my mother” – Translator.

days if one does not have a sacrifice [in Hajj], fasting for breaking an sworn oath (according to the majority), fasting to compensate for violating the conditions of ihraam (according to the most correct opinion), and fasting in fulfillment of a vow in cases where one did not have the intention of fasting consecutive days.

(7) Voluntary fasts make up for shortcomings in the obligatory fasts. Examples of voluntary fasts include 'Aashooraa', the Day of 'Arafah (for those not performing Hajj), Ayyaam al-Beed[37], Mondays and Thursdays, six days of Shawwaal, and the specifics fasts of Muharram and Sha'baan.

(8) It is not permitted to single out Friday for fasting[38] or to fast on a Saturday unless it is an obligatory fast[39]. What is intended here is singling it out without there being a valid reason. It is not permitted to fast for an entire lifetime, or to fast for two days or more without a break (i.e., to fast two or three days [straight] without breaking one's fast each day after Maghrib).

It is haraam to fast on the two Eid days or on the Ayyaam al-Tashreeq - the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, - for these are days of eating, drinking and remembering Allaah. It is permissible though for pilgrims performing Hajj to fast them (Ayyaam al-Tashreeq) in Minaa if they do not have a sacrifice to offer.

How is the Onset of Ramadan Determined?

(9) The onset of Ramadan is confirmed by the sighting of the new moon or by the completion of thirty days of Sha'baan. Whoever sees the crescent of the new moon or hears about it from a trustworthy source is obliged to fast.

[37] The 13th, 14th and 15th days of each Hijri month – Translator.

[38] Al-Bukhaari, Fat'h al-Baari, no. 1985.

[39] Reported and classed as hasan by al-Tirmidhi, 3/111.

Using calculations to determine the onset of Ramadan is a bid'ah (innovation), because the hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ) clearly states:

> **"Fast when you see it (the new moon) and break your fast when you see it."** [40]

If an adult, sane, trustworthy, reliable Muslim who has good eyesight says that he has seen the crescent with his own eyes, then we should take his word for it and act accordingly (i.e., start fasting).

Who is Obligated to Fast?

(10) Fasting is an obligation on every adult, sane, resident [i.e., not traveling] Muslim who is able to fast and has nothing to prevent him or her from doing so, such as menstruation or postpartum bleeding.

A person is deemed to have reached adulthood when any one of the following three things occur:

1) emission of semen, whether in a wet dream or otherwise;

2) growth of coarse pubic hair around the private parts;

3) attainment of fifteen years of age.

In the case of females, there is a fourth, namely menstruation. When a girl reaches menarche (starts her periods), she is obliged to fast even if she has not yet reached the age of ten.

(11) Children should be instructed to fast at the age of seven if they are able to, and some scholars said that as in the case of Salaah, a child may be physically disciplined at the age of ten if he does not fast.[41] Children will be rewarded for fasting, and their parents will be rewarded for bringing

[40] Muslim. (Editor)

[41] See al-Mughni, 3/90.

them up properly and guiding them to do righteous deeds. Al-Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh (ﷺ) said, speaking about Ramadan when it was made obligatory:

> **"We used to make our children fast, and we would make them a toy made out of wool. If any one of them started to cry for food, we would give them that toy to play with until it was time to break the fast."**[42]

Some people do not think that it is important to instruct their children to fast. Indeed a child may be enthusiastic about fasting and may be capable of doing it, but his father or mother may tell him not to fast out of so-called "pity" for him. They do not realize that true pity and compassion consist of helping him to become accustomed to fasting. Allaah says:

> **"O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded."** [Surah al-Tahreem 66:6]

Extra attention must be given to the matter of girls when they have just reached the age of maturity, for they may fast during their menses out of shyness without making up their fasts later.

(12) If a kaafir (non-Muslim) becomes Muslim, if a child reaches puberty, or if an insane person comes to his senses during the day, they should refrain from eating until dusk, for they are now among those who are obligated to fast. They do not, however, have to make up for the days of Ramadan that they have missed, for at that specific time they were not among those upon whom fasting was obligatory.

(13) The insane are not held responsible for their actions (their deeds are not recorded), but if a person is insane at times and sane at others, he

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[42] Al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, no. 1960.

must fast during his periods of sanity and is excused during his periods of insanity. If he becomes insane during the day, this does not invalidate his fast, just as is the case if someone becomes unconscious because of illness or some other reason, for he had the intention of fasting when he was sane.[43] A similar case is the ruling governing epileptics.

(14) If someone dies during Ramadan, there is no "debt" on him or his heirs with regard to the remaining days of the month.

(15) If someone does not know that it is obligatory to fast Ramadan or that it is haraam to eat or have sexual intercourse during the day in this month, then according to the majority of scholars, this excuse is acceptable. This may be the case for a new convert to Islam, a Muslim living in Daar al-Harb (non-Muslim lands) and a Muslim who grew up among the kuffaar. As for those who were raised amongst Muslims and were able to ask questions and find out, they have no excuse.

Travelers

(16) For a traveler to be allowed to break his fast, certain conditions must be met. His journey should be lengthy, or else be known as traveling (although there is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars on this matter), and he should have left the city and its suburbs. The majority of scholars say that the traveler should not break his fast before he passes the city limits. They say that a journey has not really begun until a person passes the city limits, and a person who is still in the city is "settled" and "present". Allaah says:

> **"… So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan, i.e., is present at his home), he must observe sawm (fasts) that month…"** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

[43] "Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan" by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.28.

He is not considered a traveler until he has left the city. If he is still within the city, he is regarded as a resident and is not permitted to shorten his prayers. His journey should also not have been one undertaken for some sinful purposes (according to the majority of scholars), or for the purpose of evading the fast.

(17) A traveler is allowed to break his fast according to the consensus of the Ummah, and no regards is taken as to his level of ability or difficulty in doing so. Even if his journey is easy and he has someone to serve him, he is still permitted to break his fast and shorten his prayers.[44]

(18) Whoever is determined to travel in Ramadan should not have the intention of breaking his fast until he is actually traveling, because something may happen to prevent him from setting out on his journey.[45]

A traveler should not break his fast until he has passed beyond the inhabited houses of his town; once he has passed the city limits, he may break his fast. Similarly if he is flying, once the plane has taken off and has gone beyond the city limits, he may break his fast. If the airport is outside his city, he can break his fast there, but if the airport is within his city or attached to it, he should not break his fast in the airport because he is still within the bounds of his own city.

(19) If the sun sets and he breaks his fast on the ground, and then the plane takes off and he sees the sun, he does not have to stop eating. He has already completed his day's fasting, and there is no way to repeat an act of worship once it has already been completed. If the plane takes off before sunset and he wants to complete that day's fast during the journey, he should not break his fast until the sun has set from wherever he is in the air. The pilot is not permitted to bring the plane down to an altitude from which the sun cannot be seen just for the purposes of breaking the fast, for this would just be a kind of trickery. If the pilot were to bring the

[44] Majmoo' al-Fataawaaa, 25/210.

[45] Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 2/278.

plane down lower for a genuine reason though, and the disk of the sun disappears as a result, he may break his fast.[46]

(20) Whoever travels to a destination and intends to stay there for more than four days must fast according to the majority of scholars. Thus, if a person travels to study abroad for several months or years, then according to the majority of scholars – including the four imaams – he is regarded as one who is "settled" there and so he has to fast and pray his prayers in full.

If a traveler passes through a city other than his own, he does not have to fast unless his stay there is longer than four days. If it is so, he must fast, because the rulings that apply to those who are settled apply also to him.[47]

(21) Whoever begins fasting while he is "settled", then embarks on a journey during the day is allowed to break his fast, because Allaah has made travel in general a legitimate excuse not to fast. Allaah says:

> **"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…"** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

(22) A person who habitually travels is permitted not to fast if he has a home to which he returns, such as a courier who travels to serve the interests of the Muslims (and also taxi drivers, pilots and airline employees, even if their travel is daily), but they have to make up the fasts later. The same applies to sailors who have a home on land. But if the sailor has his wife and all he needs with him on the ship and is constantly traveling, then he is not allowed to break his fast or shorten his prayers. If nomadic bedouins are traveling from their winter home to their summer home or vice versa, they are allowed to break their fast and shorten their prayers. Once they have settled in either their summer home or their

[46] From the Fataawaaa of Shaykh Ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

[47] See Fataawaa al-Da'wah by Ibn Baaz, 977.

winter home though, they should not break their fast or shorten their prayers, even if they are following their flocks.[48]

(23) If a traveler arrives during the day, there is a well-known difference among the scholars as to whether he should stop eating and drinking.[49] To be on the safe side though, he should stop eating and drinking out of respect for the month, but he must make the day up later whether or not he stops eating and drinking after his arrival.

(24) If he starts Ramadan in one city and then travels to another city where the people started fasting before him or after him, he should follow the ruling governing the people to whom he has traveled. He should only end Ramadan when they end Ramadan, even if it means that he is fasting for more than thirty days, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Fast when everyone is fasting, and break your fast when everyone is breaking their fast."**[50]

If this means that his fast is less than twenty-nine days, he must make it up after Eid, because the hijri month cannot be less than twenty-nine days.[51]

The Sick

(25) In the event of any sickness that makes people feel unwell, a person is allowed not to fast. The basis for this is the aayah:

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[48] See Majmoo' Fataawaa Ibn Taymiyah, 25/213.

[49] Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/212.

[50] Muslim. (Editor)

[51] From "Fataawaa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz: Fataawaa al-Siyaam", Daar al-Watan, pp. 15-16.

"… and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days on which one did not observe sawm must be made up] from other days…" [Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

But if the ailment is minor, such as a cough or headache, then it is not a valid reason to break one's fast.

If there is medical proof, if a person knows from his usual experience, or he is certain that fasting will make his illness worse or will delay his recovery, he is permitted to break his fast. Rather, it is disliked (makrooh) for him to fast in such cases. If a person is seriously ill, he is not obligated to have the intention during the night to fast the following day, even if there is a possibility that he may be well in the morning, because what counts is the present moment.[52]

(26) If fasting will cause unconsciousness, he should break his fast and make up for it later.[53] If a person falls unconscious during the day and recovers before Maghrib or after it, his fast is still valid as long as he was fasting in the morning. If he is unconscious from Fajr until Maghrib, then according to the majority of scholars his fast is not valid. According to the majority of scholars, it is obligatory for a person who falls unconscious[54] to make up his fasts later on, no matter how long he was unconscious.[55] Some scholars have issued fataawaa (verdicts) to the effect that a person who falls unconscious, takes sleeping pills, or receives a general anesthetic for a genuine reason and becomes unconscious for three days or less must

[52] If a person does not make the intention to fast the following day due to illness, but then awakens after the break of dawn and sees that he has recovered, he must refrain from eating and drinking until dusk, but he must make up for that fast later, for he did not have the intention to fast before the day started. (Editor- taken from an oral verdict given by Sheikh Abdul-Qadir al-'Aroosi)

[53] Al-Fataawaa, 25/217.

[54] It seems as if the author intends here to mean those who have fallen unconsciuos before dawn until after dusk, no matter how many days or years that maybe. (Editor)

[55] Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/412, 3/32; al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah, 5/268.

make up the fasts later on, for he is regarded as being like one who sleeps. If he is unconscious for more than three days, he does not have to make up the fasts because he is regarded as being like one who is insane.[56]

(27) If a person feels extreme hunger or thirst, and fears that he may die or that some of his faculties may be irreparably damaged, and he has credible grounds for believing this to be so, he may break his fast and make up for it later on, as saving one's life is obligatory. It is not permissible though, to break one's fast because of bearable hardship or because one feels tired or is afraid of some imagined illness. People who work in physically demanding jobs are not permitted to break their fast, and they must have the intention at night of fasting the following day. If they cannot stop working and they are afraid that some harm may befall them during the day, or they face some extreme hardship that causes them to break their fast, then they should eat only what is enough to help them bear the hardship, then they should refrain from eating until sunset, but they must make the fast up later. Workers in physically demanding jobs, such as working with furnaces and smelting metals, should try to change their hours so that they work at night or take their holidays during Ramadan. They should do so even if their leave were unpaid, but if this is not possible, they should look for another job where they can combine their religious and worldly duties.

> **"And whoever fears Allaah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine."** [Surah al-Talaaq 65:2-3][57]

Students' exams are no excuse for breaking one's fast during Ramadan, and it is not permissible to obey one's parents in breaking the fast because

[56] From the Fataawaa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

[57] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/233, 235.

of having exams. There is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator.[58]

(28) A sick person who hopes to recover should wait until he gets better, and then make up for the fasts he has missed. He is not allowed just to feed the poor. The person who is suffering from a chronic illness and has no hope of recovery and elderly people who are unable to fast should feed a poor person with half a *saa'* of the staple food of his country for every day that he has missed. (Half a *saa'* is roughly equivalent to one and a half kilograms of rice). It is permissible for him to do this all at once on one day at the end of the month, or he may feed one poor person every day. He must do this by giving actual food due to the wording of the aayah – he cannot do it by giving money to the poor.[59] He may however, give money to a trustworthy person or charitable organization to buy food and distribute it to the poor on his behalf.

If a sick person does not fast in Ramadan while waiting to recover in order that he can make the days up later, and then finds out that his sickness is chronic, he must feed a poor person for every day that he did not fast.[60] If a person is waiting to recover from his illness and hopes to get better but then dies, there is no "debt" owed by him or his heirs. If a person's sickness is considered to be chronic and he does not fast but feeds the poor instead, then medical advances result in the discovery of a remedy which he is administered and then recovers, he does not have to make up the fasts he has missed, because he did what he had to do at that time.[61]

(29) If a sick person recovers and is able to make up the missed fasts but does not do so before he dies, money should be taken from his estate to feed a poor person for every day that he missed. If any of his relatives

[58] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/241.

[59] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/198.

[60] From the Fataawaa of Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

[61] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/195.

want to fast on his behalf, then this is fine, for it was reported in Bukhari and Muslim that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

> **"Whoever dies owing some fasts, let his heir fast on his behalf."**[62]

The Elderly

(30) The very elderly who have lost their strength and are getting weaker every day as death approaches do not have to fast, and they are allowed not to fast so long as fasting is difficult for them. Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنهما) said concerning the aayah:

> **"And as for those who can fast with difficulty (e.g., an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a poor person (for every day)."** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:184]

"This has not been abrogated. It refers to the old man and the old woman who cannot fast, so they should feed a poor person for every day."[63]

Those who have become senile and confused do not have to fast or do anything else, and their family does not have to do anything on their behalf either. Such people are no longer counted as responsible. If they are of sound mind sometimes and confused at other times, they have to fast when they are sound and they do not have to fast when they are confused.[64]

(31) As for those who are fighting an enemy or are being besieged by them, they are allowed to break their fast if it might make them too weak to fight, even if they are not traveling. If they need to break their fast

[62] From Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, volume on Da'wah, 806.

[63] Al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-Tafseer, Baab Ayyaaman Ma'doodaat.

[64] See Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan by Ibn 'Uthyameen, p. 28.

before fighting, they may do so. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said to his Companions before fighting:

> **"In the morning you are going to meet your enemy and not fasting will make you stronger, so do not fast."** [65]

This is also the preferred opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. The scholars of Damascus also issued fatwas to the same effect when their city was attacked by the Tatars.

(32) If a person's reason for not fasting is obvious, such as illness, there is nothing wrong with him eating or drinking openly. But if the reason is hidden, such as menstruation, it is better to eat and drink in secret so as not to attract accusations and the like.

Niyyah (Intention) in Fasting

(33) Niyyah (intention) is a required condition of the obligatory fast [of Ramadan] as well as other obligatory fasts, such as making up missed fasts or fasts done as an act of kaffaarah (expiation), because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"There is no fast for the person who did not intend to fast from the night before."**[66]

The intention may be made at any point during the night, even if it is just a moment before Fajr. Niyyah means the resolution in the heart to do something; speaking it aloud is bid'ah (a reprehensible innovation), and anyone who knows that tomorrow is one of the days of Ramadan and wants to fast has [due to that knowledge, already] made the intention. (Majmoo' Fataawaa Shaykh al-Islam, 25/215) If a person intends to break

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[65] Reported by Muslim, 1120, 'Abd al-Baaqi edition.

[66] Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 2454. A number of the scholars, such as al-Bukhaari, al-Nasaa`i, al-Tirmidhi and others thought it was likely to be mawqoof. See Talkhees al-Habeer, 2/188.

his fast during the day but does not do so, then according to the most correct opinion, his fast is not adversely affected; he is like a person who wants to speak during the prayer but does not speak. Some of the scholars think that he is not fasting as soon as he stops intending to fast, so as a precaution, he should make up that fast later. Apostasy, however, invalidates the intention; there is no dispute on this matter.

The person who is fasting Ramadan does not need to repeat the intention every night during Ramadan; it is sufficient to have the intention at the beginning of the month. If the intention is interrupted by breaking the fast due to travel or sickness, for example, he has to renew the intention to fast when the reason for breaking the fast is no longer present.

(34) Making the intention the night before is not a condition of general nafil (supererogatory or voluntary) fasts, because of the hadeeth narrated by 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ), who said:

> **"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) entered upon me one day and said, 'Do you have anything (food)?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'In that case I am fasting.' "**[67]

But in the case of specific supererogatory fasts such as 'Arafah and 'Aashooraa', it is better to be on the safe side and make the intention the night before.

(35) If a person embarks on an obligatory fast, such as making up for a day missed in Ramadan, fulfilling a vow, or fasting as an act of kaffaarah (expiation), he must complete the fast and is not permitted to break it unless he has a valid excuse for doing so. In the case of a nafil fast:

> **"The person who is observing a voluntary fast is his own ameer (leader), if he wishes he may [continue his] fast, and if he wishes he may break it."**[68]

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[67] Reported by Muslim, 2/809, 'Abd al-Baaqi.

[68] Reported by Ahmad, 6/342.

…even if there is no reason to break it. The Prophet (ﷺ) awoke one morning and fasted, and then he ate.[69] But will the person who breaks his fast for no reason be rewarded for the fasting that he has already done? Some of the scholars say that he will not be rewarded[70], so it is better for the person who is observing a voluntary fast to complete it unless there is a valid, pressing reason for him to stop fasting.

(36) If a person does not know that Ramadan has started until after dawn, he must stop eating and drinking for the rest of the day and make that day up later on according to the majority of scholars, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"There is no fasting for the one who does not have the intention to fast from the night before."**[71]

(37) If a prisoner or captive knows that Ramadan has begun by sighting the moon himself or by being told by a trustworthy person, he must fast. If he does not know when the month is beginning, he must try to deduce it himself (ijtihaad) and act according to what he thinks is most likely. If at a later point he finds out that his fasting coincided with Ramadan, this is fine according to the majority of scholars, and if his fasting came after Ramadan, this is fine according to the majority of fuqahaa´. But if his fasting came before Ramadan, this is not acceptable and he must make up the fast. If part of his fasting coincided with Ramadan and part of it did not, what coincided with it or came after it is fine, but what came before is not. If the matter never becomes clear to him, then his fasting is acceptable because he did the best he could, and Allaah burdens not a person beyond his ability.[72]

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[69] As reported in Saheeh Muslim, in the story of the al-hais (a type of food) that was given to him as a gift when he was in 'Aa`ishah's house; no. 1154, 'Abd al-Baaqi.

[70] Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 28/13.

[71] Reported by Abu Dawood, 2454.

[72] Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 28/84.

When to Start and Stop Fasting

(38) Once the entire disk of the sun has disappeared [below the horizon], the fasting person should break his fast and not pay any attention to the red glow that remains on the horizon. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Once night comes from there and the day disappears from there, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast."**[73]

The Sunnah is to hasten in breaking the fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) would not pray Maghrib until he had broken his fast, if only with a sip of water.[74] If a fasting person cannot find anything with which to break his fast, he should have the intention in his heart to break his fast and should not suck his finger [or the like], as some of the common folk do. He should beware of breaking the fast before the correct time. Once the Prophet (ﷺ) saw some people hanging from their hamstrings with blood pouring from the corners of their mouths. When he asked about them, he was told that they were people who broke their fast before it was time to do so.[75] If a person is certain, thinks it most likely, or is in equal doubt whether or not he broke the fast before the proper time, he should make up the fast later on, for the basic principle is that the day has not ended.[76] He should beware of relying on the word of small children or untrustworthy sources, and he should also beware of the time differences between different cities and villages when he hears the adhaan on the radio and so on.

(39) When dawn appears, which is the white light which spreads across the horizon in the East [well before the actual sunrise], the fasting person must stop eating and drinking straightaway whether he hears the adhaan

[73] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, no. 1954; the issue is also mentioned in Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/216.

[74] Reported by al-Haakim, 1/432; al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, 2110.

[75] The hadeeth is in Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1986, and in Saheeh al-Targheeb, 1/420.

[76] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/287.

or not. If he knows that the mu`edhin calls the adhaan at dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking as soon as he hears his adhaan, but if the mu`edhin calls the adhaan before Fajr, he does not have to stop eating and drinking when he hears it. If he does not know the mu`edhin's usual practice, or there are differences among the mu`edhins and he is unable to determine the time of dawn for himself – as is usually the case in cities due to lighting and buildings – he should take the precaution of referring to a printed timetable, so long as he is sure that the calculations on which it is based are not incorrect.[77]

The idea of taking precautionary measures by stopping eating and drinking a certain time before Fajr, such as ten minutes before, is bid'ah. On some timetables you can see one heading for "imsaak" (stopping eating and drinking) and another for Fajr. This is something that is contrary to Islam.

(40) The Muslims living in cities where there is a distinct alternation of night and day in every twenty-four hour period are obliged to fast, no matter how long the day is, so long as there is a distinction between night and day. In those places where there is no such distinction, Muslims should fast according to the times in the nearest city in which there is a distinct alternation of night and day.

Things that Break the Fast

(41) Apart from menstruation and postnatal bleeding, other things which break the fast are only considered to do so if the following three conditions apply:

1) If a person knows that it breaks the fast and is not ignorant;

[77] He should also make sure that the watch he is using is set to the right time, for this might lead the person to break his fast before its proper time. (Editor)

2) If he is aware of what he is doing and has not forgotten that he is fasting;

3) If he does it of his own free will and is not forced to do it.

Among the things that break the fast are actions that involve the expulsion of bodily fluids, such as intercourse, vomiting, menstruation and cupping; and actions that involve ingesting matter, such as eating and drinking.[78]

(42) Among the things that break the fast are things that are classified as being like eating or drinking, such as taking medicines and pills by mouth, injections of nourishing substances, or blood transfusions.

- Injections that are not given to replace food and drink but are used to administer medications such as penicillin and insulin, tonics, or vaccinations do not break the fast regardless of whether they are intramuscular or intravenous.[79] But as a precaution, all these injections should be given during the night.

- Kidney dialysis, whereby the blood is taken out, cleaned, and put back with some chemicals or nourishing substances such as sugars and salts added, is considered to break the fast.[80]

- According to the most correct view, suppositories, eye-drops, ear-drops, having a tooth extracted and treating wounds do not break the fast.[81]

- Inhalators used for asthma do not break the fast, because this is just compressed gas that goes to the lungs – it is not food, and it is needed at all times, in Ramadan and others.

- Having a blood sample taken does not break the fast and is permissible because it is something that is needed.[82]

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78 Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/148.

79 Fataawaa Ibn Ibraaheem, 4/189.

80 Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/190.

81 Majmoo' Fataawaa Shaykh al-Islam, 25/233, 25/245.

- Medicines used by gargling do not break the fast so long as they are not swallowed. If a person has a tooth filled and feels the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast.[83]

The following things do NOT break the fast:

- Having the ears syringed, nose drops and nasal sprays – so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Tablets that are placed under the tongue to treat angina and other conditions - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Anything inserted into the vagina, such as pessaries, douches, scopes or fingers for the purpose of a medical examination.

- Insertion of a scope or intra-uterine device (IUD or "coil") and the like into the uterus.

- Insertion into the urethra – for males or females – of a catheter, opaque dye for diagnostic imaging, medication or solutions for cleansing the bladder.

- Dental fillings, tooth extractions, cleaning of the teeth, use of siwaak or toothbrush - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Rinsing, gargling or applying topical mouth sprays - so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.

- Subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous injections – except for those used to provide nourishment.

- Oxygen.

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[82] Fataawaa al-Da'wah: Ibn Baaz, no. 979.

[83] From the Fataawaa of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, issued verbally.

- Anesthetic gases – so long as the patient is not given nourishing solutions.

- Medications absorbed through the skin, such as creams and patches used to administer medicine and chemicals.

- Insertion of a catheter into veins for diagnostic imaging or treatment of blood vessels in the heart or other organs.

- Use of a laparoscope (instrument inserted through a small incision in the abdomen) to examine the abdominal cavity or to perform operations.

- Taking biopsies or samples from the liver or other organs – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions.

- Gastroscopy – so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions or other substances.

- Introduction of any instrument or medication to the brain or spinal column.

(43) Anyone who eats and drinks deliberately during the day in Ramadan with no valid excuse has committed a kabeerah (grave major sin) and has to repent and make up for that fast later on. If he broke the fast with something haraam, such as drinking alcohol, this makes his sin even worse. Whatever the case, he has to repent sincerely and do more voluntary deeds, fasting and other acts of worship so as to avoid having any shortfall in his record of obligatory deeds, and so that Allaah might accept his repentance.

(44) **"If he forgets, and eats and drinks, then let him complete his fast, for Allaah has fed him and given him to drink."** [84]

According to another report,

> **"He does not have to make the fast up later or offer expiation (kaffaarah)."**[85]

[84] Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fat'h, no. 1933.

If a person sees someone else who is eating because he has forgotten that he is fasting, he should remind him, because of the general meaning of the aayah:

"Help one another in righteousness and piety." [Surah al-Maa`idah 5:2]

…and the hadeeth,

"If I forget, remind me."[86]

…and that is because of the principle that this is a munkar (evil action) that must be changed.[87]

(45) Those who need to break their fast in order to save someone whose life is in danger may do so, but they should make it up later. This applies in cases where someone is drowning, or when fires need to be put out.

(46) If a person is obliged to fast but deliberately has intercourse during the day in Ramadan of his own free will, and where the two "circumcised parts" (genitals) come together and the head of the penis penetrates either the front or back passage, his fast is broken whether or not he ejaculates, and he must repent. He should still fast for the rest of the day, but he must make up the fast later on and offer expiation (kaffaarah). In a hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah:

"Whilst we were sitting with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man came to him and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, I am doomed!' He said, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.' The Messenger of Allaah said, 'Do you have a slave whom you could set free?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Can you fast for two

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[85] Reported by ibn Khuzaimah, ibn Hibbaan, al-Haakim, and Daaraqutni, Fat'h. (Editor)

[86] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

[87] Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p.70.

consecutive months?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor people?' He said, 'No'…"[88]

The same ruling also applies in cases of zinaa (adultery or fornication), homosexuality and bestiality.[89]

If a person has intercourse during the day on more than one day in Ramadan, he must offer expiation for each day as well as repeating the fast for each day. Not knowing that kaffaarah (expiation) is obligatory is no excuse.[90]

(47) If a man wants to have intercourse with his wife but he breaks his fast by eating first, his sin is more serious, because he has violated the sanctity of the month on two counts, by eating and by having intercourse. It is even more certain in this case that expiation is obligatory, and if he tries to get out of it, that only makes matters worse. He must repent sincerely.[91]

(48) Kissing, hugging, embracing, touching and repeatedly looking at one's wife or concubine, if a man is able to control himself, is permissible, because it is reported in Bukhari and Muslim from 'Aa`ishah (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to kiss and embrace his wives whilst he was fasting, but he was the most in control of his desire. With regard to the hadeeth qudsi,

"He keeps away from his wife for My (Allah's) sake."[92]

…this is referring to intercourse. But if a person becomes aroused quickly and is unable to control himself, then it is not permissible for him to kiss or embrace his wife, because that will lead to him breaking his fast, as he

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[88] Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fat'h, 4, no. 1936.

[89] Translator's Note: Having Intercourse from the back passage, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality are major sins in Islam and are [even more] magnified if done during the day of Ramadhan.

[90] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/321.

[91] See Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/262.

[92] Al-Mundhiri, "Al-Targheeb w'al-Tarheeb". Al-Albani declared it as Saheeh. (Editor)

cannot be sure that he will be able to avoid ejaculating or having intercourse. Allaah says in a hadeeth qudsi:

"…and he leaves his desire for My (Allah's) sake."[93]

The Islamic guideline is that anything that leads to haraam is also haraam.

(49) If a person is engaged in the act of intercourse and dawn appears, he is obliged to withdraw. His fast will be valid even if he ejaculates after withdrawal, but if he continues having intercourse until after dawn, he has broken his fast and must repent, make the fast up later, and offer expiation.

(50) If morning comes and a person is in a state of janaabah (impurity following sexual intercourse), this does not affect his fasting. He or she is permitted to delay doing ghusl - whether it is for janaabah, following menstruation, or post-natal bleeding - until dawn has appeared (though well before sunrise) but it is better to hasten to do ghusl so that one can pray.

(51) If a person who is fasting sleeps and experiences a wet dream, this does not break his fast according to scholarly consensus (ijmaa'). The person should complete his fast. Delaying doing ghusl (until after dawn has appeared but well before sunrise) does not break the fast, but he should hasten to do ghusl so that he can pray and so that the angels will draw close to him.

(52) If a person ejaculates during the day in Ramadan because of something that he could have refrained from, such as touching or repeatedly looking at a woman, he must repent to Allaah and fast for the rest of the day and must make up that fast later. If a person starts to masturbate but then stops and does not ejaculate, he must repent, but he does not have to make the fast up later on because he did not ejaculate. The person who is fasting must keep away from everything that may provoke his desire, and he must repel any bad thoughts that come to him.

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[93] Al-Bukhaari. (Editor)

However, according to the most correct opinion, if he emits madhiy (pre-seminal fluid), this does not break his fast.

The emission of wadiy (prostatic fluid), a thick sticky substance that comes out after urination with no sense of physical pleasure, does not break the fast. The person does not have to do ghusl, but he does have to do istinjaa´ (clean his private parts with water) and wudoo´.[94]

(53) **"Whoever vomits unintentionally does not have to make up the fast later on, but whoever vomits on purpose does have to make up the fast."**[95]

A person who vomits deliberately by inserting his finger into his throat, applying pressure to his stomach, deliberately smelling a repulsive odor, or looking at something that could make him vomit is obliged to make up the fast later on. If he feels that he is about to vomit but then it subsides by itself, this does not break his fast because it is not something that he can control. If the vomit though, comes into his mouth and he swallows it back down, this does break the fast. If a person feels sick in his stomach, he does not have to suppress the urge to vomit, because this could cause him harm.[96]

If a person unintentionally swallows something that is stuck between his teeth, or if it is so small that he could not tell it was there or spit it out, this is counted as being part of his saliva and it does not break his fast. But if it is big enough to spit out, he should do so. If he spits it out, this is fine, but if he swallows it, this breaks his fast. If it can be diluted in the mouth, in whole or in part, and it has an added taste or sweetness, it is haraam for him to chew it. If any of this substance reaches the throat, this breaks the fast. If a person spits out water after rinsing his mouth, his fast is not affected by any moisture or wetness that is left behind, because he cannot help it.

[94] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/279.

[95] Saheeh hadeeth narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3/89.

[96] Majaalis Sharh Ramadaan, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 67.

If a person suffers from a nosebleed, his fast is still valid, because this is something that is beyond his control.[97]

If he has gum ulcers or his gums bleed after using the siwaak (tooth stick), it is not permissible for him to swallow the blood; he must spit it out. However, if some blood enters his throat by accident and he did not mean for that to happen, there is no need to worry. Similarly, if vomit rises in his throat and then goes back down to his stomach without him intending for this to happen, his fast is still valid.[98]

With regard to mucus originating from the head (nose and sinuses) and phlegm originating from the chest by coughing and clearing the throat, if it is swallowed before it reaches the mouth, this does not break a person's fast, because it is a problem which all people have; but if it is swallowed after it reaches the mouth, this does break the fast. However, if it is swallowed unintentionally, it does not break the fast.

Inhaling water vapor, as may happen to people working in desalination plants, does not break the fast.[99]

It is makrooh (disliked) to taste food unnecessarily because this carries the risk that the fast may be broken. Examples of cases where it is necessary to taste food include a mother chewing food for an infant when she has no other way to feed him, tasting food to make sure that it is fine, and tasting something when making a purchase. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas said:

> **"There is nothing wrong with tasting vinegar or anything that one wishes to buy."**[100]

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[97] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/264.

[98] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/254.

[99] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/276.

[100] Classed as hasan in Irwaa´ al-Ghaleel, 4/86; See al-Fat'h, commentary on Baab Ightisaal al-Saa`im, Kitaab al-Siyaam.

(54) Using siwaak is Sunnah for the one who is fasting at all times of the day, even if it is fresh and moist. If a person who is fasting uses a siwaak and detects some heat or other taste from it and swallows it, or if he takes the siwaak out of his mouth and sees saliva on it then puts it back in his mouth and swallows the saliva, this does not break his fast.[101] He should avoid what contains substances which can be diluted, such as the green siwaak or siwaak that has any extra flavor added to it, like lemon or mint. He should spit out any small pieces that come off the siwaak in his mouth; he should not swallow them deliberately, but if he swallows them accidentally, there is no harm done.

(55) If a fasting person is injured or suffers a nosebleed, or gets water or petrol in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast. If he gets dust, smoke or flies in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast either. Things that one cannot avoid swallowing, like one's own saliva or dust from grinding flour, do not break the fast. If a person gathers a lot of saliva in his mouth then swallows it on purpose, this does not break the fast according to the most correct opinion.[102]

If tears reach one's throat, if a person applies oil to his hair or moustache or if a person uses henna and then detects the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. Using henna, kohl or oil does not break the fast.[103] This also applies to creams used to moisturize and soften the skin.

There is nothing wrong with smelling pleasant fragrances, using perfume, or applying scented creams and the like. There is nothing wrong with a fasting person using incense as long as he does not use it as snuff.[104]

It is better not to use toothpaste during the day, and to leave it till night-time, because its characteristics are too strong.[105]

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101 Al-Fataawaa al-Sa'diyyah, 245.

102 Al-Mughni by Ibn Qudaamah, 3/106.

103 See Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 25/233, 25/245.

104 Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/314.

(56) To be on the safe side, it is better for the fasting person not to be treated with cupping (hijaamah). There is a strong difference of opinion on this matter. Ibn Taymiyah suggested that the one who has cupping done breaks his fast, but the one who does it does not break his fast.

(57) Smoking breaks the fast, and it cannot be used as an excuse not to fast. How can a sin be taken as an excuse?!

(58) Immersing oneself in water or wrapping oneself in wet clothes in order to cool down does not break the fast. There is nothing wrong with pouring water over one's head to obtain relief from heat and thirst. Swimming is disliked because it might make one break the fast (by swallowing water). If a person's work involves diving and he can be sure that he will not get water in his mouth, there is nothing wrong with this.

(59) If a person eats, drinks or has intercourse thinking that it is still night and then realizes that dawn has already broken, there is no harm done, because the aayah clearly states that it is permissible to do these things until one is sure that dawn has come. 'Abd al-Razzaaq reported with a saheeh isnaad going back to Ibn 'Abbaas (ﷺ) that he said:

> **"Allaah has permitted you to eat and drink so long as there is any doubt in your mind."**[106]

(60) If a person breaks his fast thinking that the sun has already set when it has not, he must make up the fast later on (according to the majority of scholars). This is due to the fact that the general principle is that it is still day, and a fact that is certain cannot be rejected in favor of something doubtful.[107]

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105 Al-Majaalis, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 72.

106 Fath al-Baari, 4/135; this is also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmoo' al-Fataawaa, 29/263.

107 Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah thought that it was not necessary for a person in this situation to make up the fast.

If dawn breaks and a person still has food or drink in his mouth, the fuqahaa′ are in agreement that he should spit it out, and his fast is valid. This is like the ruling on one who eats or drinks because he forgets, then remembers he is fasting – if he hastens to spit out the food or drink in his mouth, his fast is still valid.

Rulings on Fasting for Women

(62) A woman who has reached the age of puberty but is too shy to tell anyone and thus does not fast must repent and make up the days she has missed. If the following Ramadan comes and she has not yet made up those days, she must also feed a poor person for each day as an act of expiation for delaying her fast. Her case is like that of a woman who fasts the days of her period out of shyness and does not make them up later.

If a woman does not know exactly how many days she has missed, she should fast until she is fairly certain that she has made up the days she had missed and not made up from previous Ramadans, and offer the expiation for delaying for each day. She can do this at the same time as fasting or separately, depending on what she is able to do.

(63) A woman should not fast – except during Ramadan – if her husband is present without his permission, but if he is traveling then it does not matter.

(64) When a menstruating woman sees the white substance which is discharged by the uterus when the period is finished by which a woman knows that she has now become taahir (pure), she should have the intention to fast from the night before and should fast. If she does not have a time when she knows she is taahir, she should insert a piece of cotton or something similar, and if it comes out clean, she should fast. If she starts to bleed again, she should stop fasting whether the blood is a

flow or just spotting, because it breaks the fast as long as it comes at the time of the period.[108]

If the cessation of bleeding continues until Maghrib, and she has fasted with the intention from the night before, then her fast is valid. If a woman feels the movement of menstrual blood inside her but it does not come out until after the sun has set, her fast is valid and she does not have to make the day up later.

If a woman's period or post-natal bleeding ceases during the night, and she makes the intention to fast, but dawn comes before she is able to do ghusl, according to all the scholars her fast is valid.[109]

(65) If a woman knows that her period will come tomorrow, she should still continue her intention and keep fasting; she should not break her fast until she actually sees the blood.

(66) It is better for a menstruating woman to remain natural and accept what Allaah has decreed for her without taking any medication to prevent her from bleeding. She should be content with what Allaah accepts from her of breaking her fast during her period and making those days up later. This is how the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the Salaf were. (Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/151). Moreover, there is medical evidence to prove that many of the things used to prevent bleeding are in fact harmful, and many women have suffered from irregular periods as a result of taking them. However, if a woman does that and takes something to stop the bleeding and then fasts, this is acceptable.

(67) Istihaadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding) does not have any effect on the validity of the fast.

(68) If a pregnant woman has a miscarriage and the fetus has taken shape or has a discernible outline of any part of the body, such as a head or

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[108] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/154.

[109] Al-Fat'h, 4/148.

hand, then her blood is considered nifaas (postpartum). If, however, she passes something that looks like a blood clot ('alaq) or a chewed piece of meat (mudghah) that has no discernible human features, her bleeding is istihaadah (false menstruation). If she is able, she must fast, otherwise she can break her fast and make it up later on.[110] Once she becomes clean after having an operation to clean the womb (D&C), she should fast. The scholars stated that the embryo is considered to start taking shape after 80 days of pregnancy.

If a woman becomes clean from nifaas before forty days, she should fast and do ghusl so that she can pray.[111] If the bleeding resumes within forty days after the birth, she should stop fasting, because this is still nifaas. If the bleeding continues after the fortieth day, she should make the intention to fast and do ghusl (according to the majority of scholars), and any bleeding beyond the fortieth day is considered to be istihaadah (non-menstrual bleeding) – unless it coincides with the usual time of her period, in which case it is hayd (menstrual blood).

If a breastfeeding woman fasts during the day and sees a spot of blood during the night although she was clean during the day, her fast is still valid.[112]

(69) According to the most correct opinion, a woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding is regarded as being like one who is ill, so she is permitted not to fast. She is only obligated to make up the days that she missed, whether she fears for herself or for her child. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> **"Allaah has lifted the obligation of fasting and part of the prayer from the traveler, and He has lifted the obligation of fasting from the pregnant and breastfeeding woman."**[113]

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[110] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/224.

[111] Al-Mughni ma'a al-Sharh al-Kabeer, 1/360.

[112] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/150.

[113] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 3/85; he said (it is a) hasan hadeeth.

If a pregnant woman fasts and experiences some bleeding, her fast is still valid and does not affect it at all.[114]

(70) In the case of a woman who is obligated to fast, if her husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadan with her consent, then the ruling that applies to him also applies to her. If however he forces her to do so, she should do her best to resist him. If she was unsuccessful, she does not have to offer expiation. Ibn 'Aqeel (may Allaah have mercy on him) said that a woman whose husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramadan whilst she is sleeping does not have to offer expiation.

As a precaution, she should make up that fast later on.[115]

A woman who knows that her husband cannot control himself should keep away from him and not adorn herself during the day in Ramadan.

Women have to make up the fasts that they miss during Ramadan, even if they do so without their husbands' knowledge. It is not a condition for an obligatory fast for a woman to have the permission of her husband. If a woman starts to observe an obligatory fast, she is not allowed to break it except for a legitimate reason. Her husband is not permitted to order her to break her fast when she is making up a day that she has missed; he is not allowed to have intercourse with her when she is making up a missed fast, and she is not allowed to obey him in that regard.[116]

In the case of voluntary fasts, a woman is not permitted to start a non-obligatory fast when her husband is present without his permission, due to the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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[114] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/225.

[115] Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was of the opinion that this did not invalidate her fast at all.

[116] Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daa`imah, 10/353.

"No woman should fast when her husband is present except with his permission."[117]

[117] Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4793.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is what I was able to write about issues concerning fasting. I ask Allaah to help us to remember Him, thank Him and worship Him properly, and to conclude our Ramadan with forgiveness, and to save us from the Fire.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions, and grant them peace.